is large variation in time and space in rainfall, About 80% of the rainfall occurs during the monsoon period. Consequently, there is considerable variation in the availability of flows in the rivers from time to time within a year. Variations are also observed from year to year. Further, the requirements and the availability at different time also vary considerably. Therefore, it is considered necessary to store the available water in reservoirs whenever it is more than the requirements to utilize the same when requirement is more than the available flows.

(b) Total number of large reservoirs in the country is 3596.

(c) Total live storage capacity of these reservoirs is 177 billion cubic metre.

Demand and supply of water

1781. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last 50 years India has been reduced from a water-rich country to a water scarce country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to reverse the trend and take back the country to its original position and reduce the mismatch between the demand and supply of water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) The annual average flow in the river systems of the country is 1869 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM). The per capita water availability in 1951 was 5177 cubic metre per year. With growth of population from 361 million in 1951 to 1027 million in 2001, the per capita water availability reduced to 1820 cubic metre per year. Due to variation in rainfall in space and time, the availability of water also varies from basin to basin in the country and in some of the basins, the per capita water availability is less than 1000 cubic metre per year. As per international criteria, a situation of annual per capita availability of water of less than 1000 cubic metre is considered as scarcity condition.

(b) The rapid growth of population has led to lesser per capita availability of water.

(c) Due to rapid growth of population, urbanisation and improved standards of living, the demand of water has considerably increased. Various schemes, particularly storage schemes have already been completed with a view to reduce the gap between demand and availability. The live storage capacity created so far is about 177 BCM. Additional storage capacity of 75 BCM will be created on completion of projects which are under various stages of construction. Proposals for additional projects are also under formulation/consideration for creation of storage capacity of 132 BCM. To accelerate creation of irrigation potential by early completion of ongoing schemes, Government of India has launched Accelerated Irrigation benefits Programme (AIBP). Government of India is also promoting rainwater harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rainwater harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme of the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Governments and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up a Central Sector Scheme on "Studies of Recharge to Ground Water" on pilot basis. For meeting future requirements of water, as a long term measure, National Water Development Agency have formulated National Perspective Plan for water resources development which envisages interlinking various Peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers.

Renewal of ground water resources

1782. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any perspective plan exists at national level for conservation and renewal of ground water resources to prevent possible water famine in the first quarter of the 21st century; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) The National Water Policy adopted by Government of India in the year 2002 envisages that exploitation of ground water resources should be so